RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 29th July, 1985/
7 Sravana, 1907 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

OBITUARY REFERENCE

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members must have heard of the sad news of passing away of Shrimati Savitri Devi Nigam, an ex-Member of the Rajya Sabha, yesterday on the 28th July, 1985.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam was born in May 1919 at Banda. She had her education at Allahabad and Banda. A noted social worker, Shrimati Nigam was connected with a large number of organisations for the welfare of women and children. An active Member of this House for two terms from 1952 to 1956 and again from 1956 to 1962 from the State of Uttar Pradesh, she took keen interest in the proceedings of the House, especially concerning women and children. As a Vice-Chairman of this House during 1957-58, Shrimati Nigam presided over the sittings of the House with dignity. In 1962 she was elected to Lok Sabha.

We deeply mourn the passing away of Shrimati Nigam. I request the Members to rise in their places and observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

[Hon. Members then stood in silence for one minute.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Secretary-General will convey to the members of the bereaved family our sense of profound sorry and deep sympathy.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Priority list of drugs

*81. SHRIMATI USHA MALHOTRA:†
SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "An Irrational Priority List" which appared in the 'Times of India' of the 24th June, 1985;

(b) if so, what were the terms of reference of the Medical Experts' Group constituted to draw up a list of priority drugs;

(c) whether the terms of reference were communicated to the Medical Experts' Group in writing;

(d) what were the criteria adopted by the Medical Experts' Group in drawing the priority list and the names of the drugs so listed;

(e) what was the purpose of the steering Committee who constituted the Medical Experts' Group;

(f) what was the total number of members of the group names of the members and how many of them were officials and who was its Chairman; and

(g) whether any background material was provided to the group for identifying the priority list, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS(SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL): (a) to (g) A Statement is laid on the Table of the Rajya Sabha.

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†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shrimati Usha Malhotra.

Statement

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) and (f) to (g) The following four Medical Experts who were also the Members of the Steering Committee of National Drugs and Pharmaceutical Development Council (NDPDC) constituted the Group of medical Experts:

(i)) Dr. B.B. Goitonde—Chairman

(ii) Dr. H. Grover, Indian Medical Association

(iii) Dr. S. S. Gothoskar (Dr. Kannan), Drug Controller of India

(iv) Dr. Satyavati, Indian Council of Medical Research.

This was done as a part of internal exercise of NDPDC and there were no written terms of reference. The Medical Experts were assigned the task of drawing up the list of priority drugs by the said Steering Committee, bearing in mind the criteria adopted by UNIDO for inclusion of drugs in essential list and the drugs in the WHO and the Hathi Committee lists of Essential Drugs. The Medical Experts accordingly drew up a list of 95 bulk drugs. The medicines required by large majority of the people for the most common diseases known, including those required by the National Health Programme constitute the said priority list.

(e) The said Steering Committee was constituted by the NDPDC to consolidate and further refine the reports of its three Working Groups.

SHRIMATI USHA MALHOTRA: Sir, I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is a fact that in case of medicines the prices of which have been decontrolled, there has been an increase of prices ranging from 100 per cent to 400 per cent with respect to th Price Control Order of 1979. Based on the same experience, will there not be a steady increase in the prices of medicines which have been recommended for decontrol by the NDPDC? Has this aspect been kept in mind by the medical experts group? If so, how did it recommend for decontrol more medicines which have a larger turn over and which are consumed by the common man?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: Sir, there was the list of drugs for price control which was drawn up by the NDPDC. The NDPDC took a decision to review the drug policy and appointed three working groups. The working groups made the recommendation and the recommendation was considered by the steering committee. The steering committee appointed an expert committee to go into this and prepared the list for priority drugs. So, they have prepared the list and given the list. According to that priority list there are 95 drugs which are included in it and this is the report of the NDPDC which is under the consideration of the Government.

SHRIMATI USHA MALHOTRA: Sir, the hon. Minister has just made reference that no written terms of reference were given over to this committee. I am really amazed at it. Will the Minister kindly indicate what are the important bulk drugs which have been left out in the priority list and what is the reason therefor? Will he kindly assure the House that all important drugs which were identified by the Hathi Committee as essential, would be included in the priority list?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I can give the list of the drugs which are included in the priority list. While drawing up the list, the criteria which were decided by the UNIDO were taken into consideration by the committee. Then, the list which was prepared by the World Health Organisation was also taken into consideration and the drugs which were mentioned by the Hathi Committee in their report were also taken into consideration. All these three things were taken into consideration and the expert group made a recommendation. Originally, they prepared a list of 138 drugs. Subsequently, they revised the

list and their final list consists of 95 drugs. As to how many items have been included, how many items have been deleted, the whole explanation has been given in the report. I have already placed a copy of the report in the reference library. If the hon. Member is interested, I am prepared to send a copy of the report to her for her perusal. This will give the details, why they have deleted, why they have not included. All these details are given in the report.

SHRIMATI MAIMOONA SULTAN: Sir, we all know that the priority list of 95 drugs recommended for price control, was drawn up by a group of medical experts. Sir, it will be shocking to know that the medical experts such as Dr. Harish Grover, Dr. Satyawati and Dr. S.N. Gotoskar, in their letters written to me have stated that they were not informed that the list was for the purpose of price control and the whole exercise has been futile and that it should be redone. I have got extracts from the letters. If you permit me, Sir, I can place on the Table of the House the relevant portions of these letters, because it will take a long time to read these letters.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can write a letter to the hon. Minister.

SHRIMATI MAIMOONA SULTAN: In this context may I know from the hon. Minister why the members of the expert group were not informed that the list is for price control? I would also like to know why they were not provided with the data regarding consumption, production, installed capacity, sales turnover which, in other words, means consumption by the masses. In view of the fact that there is going to be an increase in the prices, what steps the Government propose to take to remedy the situation? Sir, the hon. Minister should give an assurance to the House that the people will be saved from disaster. If nothing else ..

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put the question.

SHRIMATI MAIMOONA SULTAN: Sir, I have got extract from the letters, as I said.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can send the letters.

श्रीमती मैमूना सुल्तान :

"झूठी तसल्ली दो कुछ दिल तो बहल जाए,
मध्यम ही सही लेकिन एक शमा तो जल जाए।"

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: The list was drawn up by the committee of experts. The committee of experts prepared the list of drugs which are *essential and which are used in abundance.* They have prepared the list from the health angle. In the NDPDC and in the steering committee, they took a decision to recommend to the Government, that so far as the list is concerned, the drugs included in the priority list should be used for price control. Dr. Grover, about whom the hon. Member has mentioned, was himself a signatory to this report, the report I have referred to, where 95 drugs are included in the priority list. He is a party to this list. He has said in the report that the price control should be made effectiv or the price control should be there only for this list. He is a party to this.

(Interruptions)

DR. JOSEPH LEON D'SOUZA: No. He is misleading the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I wish to remind hon. Members that they cannot contradict a Minister like this.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. I will explain the procedure to be followed. I will allow a supplementary and then you put your question. Please do not interrupt.

SHRIMATI MAIMOONA SULTAN: Sir, I can place the relevant papers on the Table of the House.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: The report on page 13 says. 'Majority view in favour of the industry proposal' The consensus was as follows, with regard to price control.

(1) price control should have a lesser span than now; (2) the drugs in for the priority list will be under price control, the rest of the drugs and formulations based on them being free from price control. And Dr. Grover is a signatory to this.

This is the list not prepared by the Government. These are the recommendations made by the NDPDC. Government have received these rocmmendations and this report. Government have not taken any decision on this. We are considering and we think that it is possible for the Government to take a decision as early as possible.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. D'Souza. He is the person who challenged the Minister. Therefore, I will give him the chance first.

DR. JOSEPH LEON D'SOUZA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in answer to Question No. 52 on the 23rd July, 1985, the Government revealed the terms of reference and the criteria to be adopted in the selection of drugs for the priority list. Sir, I quote:

> "Abundance of drugs at regulated and reasonable prices for most common diseases should be made available at all times to a large majority of people."

Sir, the 'Times of India' carried news item, 'An irrational priority list'. After conducting an indepth study, I am inclined to share and endorse the apprehensions expressed by the paper, and arising out of that is my supplementary. This time it is a little brief. It is in three distinct parts. Well, I expect clear-cut answers from the hon. Minister.

My first question is (a) Dr Harish Grover, an eminent cardiologist and member of the Expert Group...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. Please put the question. You know, you take a lot of time in describing persons.

DR. JOSEPH LEON D'SOUZA: I have got to say what he has said and my question comes out of that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. I will enforce two-minutes rule.

DR JOSEPH LEON D'SOUZA: Yes, Sir. He addressed a letter to Mrs. Maimoona Sultan, Member of Parliament. I am tabling that letters as an exhibit on the floor of this House. He has positively stated....

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your question?

DR. JOSEPH LEON D'SOUZA: Do not interrupt me.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What do you mean? Please put your question.

DR. JOSEPH LEON D'SOUZA: Yes. Sir. He is the member of the Expert group, Steering Committee, and that is why I have to make a reference to it. This is with reference to the context. He has categorically said that the members were told that this was not for the purpose of price control. Now my question to the Minister is, if that is the case...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down.

DR. JOSEPH LEON D'SOUZA: Two minutes are not over.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time is over. All right, I will give you one more minute. Please put your question.

SHRI S. W. DHABE: Why extension?

DR. JOSEPH LEON D'SOUZA: I will ask the question. Since the credibility of price control list has been questioned, at least an inquiry should be made to find out the veracity of facts revealed by Dr. Harish Grover.

Secondly, only one or two drugs have been included in the priority list belonging to theraputic group. This is an act of discrimination and does attract article 14 of the Constitution of India. If so, it has got to be gone into very clearly.

Thirdly, 22 drugs of category 1 and 2 are included. Their markups range from 40 to 55 per cent. The Steering Committee appointed by the Government has recommended ranging from 65 to 150 per cent. Therefore in regard to life saving and essential drugs the prices will escalate. Will the Minister give us an assurance that in regard to these category drugs the price will not escalate and they will be in abundance in the country?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: Sir, the medical experts drew up the list from health angle. Then that list came to the Steering Committee and in the NDPDC. The Steering Committee took a decision that for the purpose of price control this list prepared by the expert group should be adopted and should be accepted. So, they have made the recommendations.

I want the hon. Members to appreciate that if they ask me why a particular member has done like this, why it has been included, why it has been excluded, this is not my report, this is not a Government report. This is a report produced by NDPDC and this report is before the Government. We are considering this report. If the hon. Members ask why they have included this drug, why they did not include the other drug, how can I explain because this is not a report produced by the Government, this is a report produced by the Development Council?

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: There was a detailed discussion on the role of the multi-national companies which are manufacturing drugs in this country and exploiting the poor people of this country. So, even though no cognizance is taken by the Ministry, I would like to ask if the Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers could kindly indicate the policy framework being devised to ensure adequate role of multi-national companies to produce high technology bulk drugs and intermediates included in the priority list in the scheme of delicensing.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: Hon. Members are aware that we are following the existing policy. The hon. Member wants to know what is going to be the future policy. How can I tell, how can I anticipate what is going to be the policy in future? That is why this report is before the Government. We will consider the report. When the Government has considered it and it takes a final decision, then I will be able to tell the House about the policy we are going to adopt.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: The hon. Minister has informed the House the certain drugs which were included in the delicensing policy have been excluded. This is done under a certain criteria. Now a lot of bulk drugs which are very important have been excluded from the scheme of delicensing. Does the propose to enhance the scope of the delicensing policy so as to include these important drugs in the scheme?

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: The hon. Member has put a separate question on the delicensing of 82 drugs. That is a separate question. But those 82 drugs which not delicensed; actually the procedure has been liberalised. I have made it very clear that the policy of the Government is to liberalise the procedure and to cut short the delays and all that. Those 82 drugs which are delicensed, they are only drugs which are not reserved for public sector, which are not reserved for small scale industries and even in these 82 drugs, FERA companies, MRTP companies are not allowed to have the benefit of this delicensing.

PROF. (MRS) ASIMA CHATTERJEE: I have got two questions to the hon. Minister. Number one, whether the life saving drugs have been included and number two, whether Ayurvedic drugs and drugs used in traditional medicines have also been included in the priority list.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: Sir, so far as priority list is concerned, All the 95 drugs are there in the report and the hon. Member can find out because I am not an expert; I do not know that drugs are used for what purposes. But the entire list is there and if the hon. Member wants the entire list of 95 drugs which are listed in the priority list, they are all there and I am prepared to lay this on the Table of the House.

DR. LOKESH CHANDRA: The Minister has just now pointed out that the Government is considering the report of the Expert Committee. In th light of that, it would be perhaps wise on the part of the Ministry to take into account the suggestions of the Members put forth in the form of questions. I would like to know why very essential life-saving drugs like polio vaccine, anti-toxins and a number of other essential sera and vaccines have been omitted from the pricrity list. I would also like to know from the Minister if such priority items which have been excluded by the Expert Committee Report would be included when the Government reconsiders this report.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: Again I have to repeat that the hon. Member is asking why these drugs are not included. This list was prepared by the experts..

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member wants to know whether Government will include these in future taking into account all the suggestions of the Members.

SHRI VEERENDRA PATIL: I can only say that if hon. Members have got any view in this matter, they can write to me. Certainly we will take these into consideration before taking a final decision.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Too much of drugs is bad for the health. Next Question, No. 82.

SHRI VISHVAJIT PRITHVIJIT SINGH: I have something very important to say, Sir. (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 82.

SHRI VISHVAJIT PRITHVIJIT SINGH: Sir, the whole House is excited about it. ...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: We cannot spend 20 minutes on a single question.

SHRI VISHVAJIT PRITHVIJIT SINGH: It is a very important question, Sir.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: Sir, you please give ten minutes. .(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: If it is a very important question, you write to me for a Half-an-Hour Discussion. The time is one hour and one question cannot take 20 minutes. Next Question, No. 82.

SHRI VISHVAJIT PRITHVIJIT SINGH: Sir...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down.

Report submitted by the Force for Utilisation of Bombay High Gas

*82. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Task Force appointed by Government for optimum utilisation of Bombay High gas has submitted its report and if so what are its findings;

(b) whether the Task Force has indicated that there is surplus gas after supplying gas to the Gas Cracker Unit in Maharashtra;

(c) if so, wheher there is any provision for supplying surplus gas to